

on the role as Benefit Administrator for the State bi-weekly, and State monthly colleges for the Benefitsolver Platform, wherein she trains and assists employers and corrects information. In May 2021, the appellant claims that she took on the role of Team Lead in training a PBS 2 on the Platform to answer questions and assist bi-weekly and local government employers. This is conducted through TEAMS daily and as Team Lead, she intercepts the question for the PBS 2 when needed. She conducts up to thirty group sessions daily with various employers, is the subject matter expert and team lead for the Biweekly Payroll Agencies and the State Colleges, and assists colleagues and Certifying Officers for over 500 locations by solving complex matters involving payroll, eligibility determinations and additions/deletions of data.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:3-3.9(e) states that in classification appeals, the appellant shall provide copies of all materials submitted, the determination received from the lower level, statements as to which portions of the determination are being disputed, and the basis for appeal. Information and/or argument which was not presented at the prior level of appeal shall not be considered.

The definition section of the job specification for Pensions Benefits Specialist 1 states:

Under the close supervision of a Pensions Benefits Specialist 3 or other supervisory official in the Division of Pensions and Benefits, Department of the Treasury, processes retirement and/or health benefits for members involving basic eligibility determinations and computation or, conducts final reviews of member contribution reports or, counsels employees on retirement and health benefits; does other related duties.

The definition section of the job specification for Pensions Benefits Specialist 2 states:

Under the limited supervision of a Pensions Benefits Specialist 3 or other supervisory official in the Division of Pensions and Benefits, Department of the Treasury, acts as lead worker in a retirement, health benefits, or other employee benefit program of the Division; conducts field instructional seminars on retirement, health benefits, or other employee benefit programs of the Division; reviews, processes, and/or responds to retirement, health benefits, or other employee benefit requests and inquiries involving complicated eligibility determinations; performs complex computations; does other related duties as required.

A review of the duties of the appellant's duties indicates that they more closely match the job description for Pensions Benefits Specialist 1. A Pensions Benefits Specialist 1 is expected to process retirement and/or health benefits for members involving complicated eligibility determinations and computation; or conduct final reviews of member contribution reports; or counsel employees on retirement and health benefits. A Pensions Benefits Specialist 2 is expected to act as a lead worker in a retirement, health benefits, or other employee benefit program of the Division; or conduct field instructional seminars on retirement health benefits or other employee benefit programs of the Division; or review, process, and/or respond to retirement, health benefits or other employee benefit requests and inquiries involving complicated eligibility determinations and/or perform complex computations.

The appellant argues that she performed one of her duties as a lead worker. A leadership role refers to those persons whose titles are non-supervisory in nature, but are required to act as a leader of a group of employees in titles at the same or a lower level than themselves and perform the same kind of work as that performed by the group being led. *See In the Matter of Catherine Santangelo* (Commissioner of Personnel, decided December 5, 2005). Duties and responsibilities would include training, assigning and reviewing work of other employees on a regular and recurring basis, such that the lead worker has contact with other employees in an advisory position. However, such duties are considered non-supervisory since they do not include the responsibility for the preparation of performance evaluations. The definition of lead worker does not include being the sole individual responsible for a task.

It is not apparent that the appellant's position involves leadership over other Pensions Benefits Specialists on a consistent, daily basis. On the PCQ she submitted with her request, the appellant accounted for 100% of her duties, and they did not include assisting her supervisor with monitoring incoming work and helping to assign the workload and review the work of other PBSs. As a new duty not presented originally, it cannot be considered pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 4A:3-3.9(e)*. Additionally, the appellant completed her PCQ in February 2021, and claims additional duties were added in May 2021 regarding training others and intercepting questions. The appellant's supervisor indicated in his interview that the appellant was training new employees via Teams meetings regarding on-line applications, although she did not do group presentations, *i.e.*, she does not conduct field instructional seminars. The Civil Service Commission has found that the training duties, without the responsibility of assigning and reviewing work of other employees on a regular and recurring basis, did not establish that the position is that of a lead worker. *See In the Matter of Loretta Creggett* (CSC, decided August 1, 2018). Training of personnel, or staff development, while imperative and essential, is by definition, educational. It is not apparent that the appellant's position involves leadership over other PBSs as the duties presented to Agency Services did

not indicate that the appellant performs the scope of lead worker responsibilities, and she is not responsible for mentoring other PBSs on a consistent, daily basis. The preponderance of the duties of the position listed on the PCQ is commensurate with the Pensions Benefits Specialist 1 title.

Accordingly, a thorough review of the entire record fails to establish that the appellant has presented a sufficient basis to warrant a Pensions Benefits Specialist 2 classification of her position.

ORDER

Therefore, the position of Nicole Teel is properly classified as a Pensions Benefits Specialist 1.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON
THE 27TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2021



Deirdre L. Webster Cobb
Chairperson
Civil Service Commission

c: Nicole Teel
Holly Foster
Division of Agency Services
Records Center